

Vice Mayor and District IV Commissioner Romney Rogers



School is well underway and thousands of students are walking or riding bicycles to class. We need to lead by example and use designated crosswalks when crossing streets, as motorists must always yield to pedestrians in crosswalks. The Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach metro area was recently ranked the fourth-most-dangerous for pedestrians, according to the 2014 Dangerous by Design report released by Smart Growth America, an urban-redesign advocacy group, and the National Complete Streets Coalition.

You may have seen or heard about the purple-painted crosswalk and neon orange flags on East Las Olas. In the City's effort to improve safety and make our streets more pedestrian-friendly, we have put out buckets of these flags with an instructional sign at the corner of SE 13 Street and East Las Olas in the entertainment district. We are asking pedestrians to try a new way to cross Las Olas safely: Step into the crosswalk. Make eye contact with the oncoming driver. And then wave a neon orange flag. It's a test project to see if the flags improve traffic safety, and it's part of our plan to become a multimodal city by changing people's ideas about transportation. Our Fast Forward Fort Lauderdale plan also includes potentially expanding and reducing lanes at different parts of the road and changing traffic light sequences at SE 15 Street.

Hurricane Season – We are in the height of hurricane season now, and I want to remind everyone to stay vigilant. Please make sure your emergency-contact and insurance information is up-to-date, and that you have a three-day supply of food, water, and medications on hand, as well as other supplies. The City's helpful hurricane page is here: <http://www.fortlauderdale.gov/hurricane/index.htm>.

FY 2015 Final Budget – The City's FY 2015 Budget, adopted September 10, is driving our community-wide Vision. The budget – the foundation connecting us to our citizenry – is a strategic game plan, which allocates financial and employee resources according to the goals and objectives set by the priorities of our neighbors, as well as by the City's Vision, Strategic Plan, Commission Annual Action Plan, and Community Investment Plan. It is noteworthy that 42% of the more than 1,500 ideas generated by the Visioning process are incorporated in the City's Strategic Plan and supported by our budget.

A good sign of our economic recovery is that our property values rose 6.9% over last year, marking the third consecutive year of growth and the largest increase since 2007. The FY 2015 Budget does not increase our current operating millage rate or the fire assessment fee. We are keeping the millage rate at its current level of 4.1193 per \$1,000 of taxable value, representing the eighth consecutive fiscal year that the City Commission has held the line on property taxes. We are also projecting a \$55 million reserve fund balance, which is above our adopted policy and exceeds the national standard for municipal governments. Our strong reserve fund, along with our low debt load, enhances the City's bond ratings, saving residents and businesses millions of dollars in interest costs and strengthening our long-term financial stability.

Further, we have a 5.7% unemployment rate, lower than state and national rates. And we have the lowest number of documented crimes since the Fort Lauderdale Police Department first started tracking crime data in 1974.

Virginia Young Park – I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the Rio Vista Civic Association, businesses, and neighbors, who generously contributed \$16,400 toward playground improvements. Kompan heavy-duty custom-configured play components for both our 2 - 5 and 5 - 12 year-old children have been installed, in addition to one Spinner Bowl and one two-bay tot swing set. The 2 - 5 year-old play component is covered with a 25' x 25' shade tent, and the playground is surfaced with blue, recycled-rubber, poured-in-place safety surfacing. What a great example of the benefits of a public/private partnership!

Household Hazardous Waste – The City has partnered with neighboring communities for disposal of household hazardous waste and electronics (proof of residency required with driver's license or utility bill). The schedule is:

- September 13: City of Coconut Creek (9 AM - 2 PM) 4800 W Copans Road
- November 8: City of Pompano Beach (9 AM - 2 PM) 1660 NE 10th Street (Community Park)
- December 6: City of Tamarac (9 AM - 2 PM) 6011 Nob Hill Road

Upcoming Events

- **Calling All Volunteers!** On **Saturday, September 27** at 8 AM, the Citizens Volunteer Corps will be doing some exterior painting at Holiday Park, 1150 G. Harold Martin Drive. NCIP and BCIP points and community-service hours for students can be earned. Please call Maxine Singh at City Hall, 954-828-5005, for details.
- The first-ever **Bacon Bash** will be held on **Friday, October 3** from 6 - 10 PM at Esplanade Park.
- **The Smoke on the Water BBQ Feast** is set for **Saturday, October 11** from 11 AM - 4 PM on the Riverwalk.

➤ My City Hall Office Hours are Mondays from 2 - 5:30 PM and Tuesdays from 9 AM - Noon (in non-Commission weeks). For appointments, please contact MJ Matthews at 954-828-5028 or mmatthews@fortlauderdale.gov. In addition to hosting two Pre-Agenda Meetings per month, I am also available to attend your Civic Association meetings to update your neighborhood on what is going on in the City, as well as to answer any questions or concerns you may have. Please contact MJ to schedule.